



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
09/735,697	12/12/00	LEE	N P1230

MM92/0327
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EXAMINER

POLK, S

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2836

DATE MAILED: 03/27/01

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/735,697

Applicant(s)

LEE, NOEL

Examiner

Sharon Polk

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 December 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 29-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 29-40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been:
1. ☐ received.
2. ☐ received in Application No. (Series Code / Serial Number) _____.
3. ☐ received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

- 14) ☒ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. & 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- 15) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 16) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 17) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 18) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 19) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 20) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Response to Declarations

Note: Applicant refers to having submitted affidavits, which are actually declarations, on page 13, lines 5-8, of the preliminary amendment, paper no. 2. It is unclear from the record the intended use of all of the declarations, with regard to antedating related art under Rule 131, and secondary considerations under Rule 132.

1. The declaration filed on December 12, 2000 under 37 CFR 1.131 has been considered but is ineffective to overcome the 102(b) reference's.
2. Applicant's presumed intent to overcome the Kensington reference, and U.S. Patent 5,589,718, is inapplicable under 37 CFR 1.131, as being a statutory bar.
3. Further, applicant makes unsupported conclusory statements which are not facts. For example, applicant states that the claimed invention was first conceived in May 1993. There is insufficient evidence to support this, such as notes, sketches or drawings dated as such. Conception is the mental part of the inventive act, but it must be capable of proof, as by drawings, complete disclosure to another person, etc. MPEP § 715.07.

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Additionally, a conception of an invention, though evidence by disclosure, drawings, and even a model, is not a complete invention under the patent laws, and confers no rights on an inventor, and has no effect on a subsequently granted patent to another, UNLESS THE INVENTOR FOLLOWS IT WITH REASONABLE DILIGENCE BY SOME OTHER ACT, such as an actual reduction to practice or filing an application for a patent. *Automatic Weighing Mach. Co. v. Pneumatic Scale Corp.*, 166 F.2d 288, 1909 C.D. 498, 139 O.G. 991 (1st Cir. 1909).

Applicant's admission a first commercially viable prototype was manufactured by Monster Cable, in September 1997, may result in a due diligence problem. In particular since, applicant failed to file an application with the United States Patent and Trademark office until December 28, 1998, some 15 months later, which is also a statutory bar. Additionally, this admission may constitute an "on sale" bar because the invention was sold more than a year before filing.

4. Additionally, applicant, claims common ownership of Exhibit A, which is not the claimed invention, therefore it is not probative. Similarly, the Exhibit is dated July 28, 1997, three years prior to the filing an application.

5. The declarations under 37 CFR 1.132 filed December 12, 2000 is insufficient to overcome the rejection set fourth below.

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6. Applicant filed a 42 page 1.132, declaration which included several dozen sheets of Monster cables wholesale of the “alleged” claimed invention to its distributors without any mention of its relevance. There must be a *nexus* between the claimed invention and the sales. The term “nexus” designates a factually and legally sufficient connection between the evidence of commercial success and the claimed invention so that the evidence is of probative value in the determination of nonobviousness. *Demaco Corp. v. F. Von Langsdorff Licensing Ltd.*, 851 F.2d 1387, 7USPQ2d 1222 (Fed. Cir. 1988).

In considering evidence of commercial success, care should be taken to determine that the commercial success alleged is directly derived from the invention claimed, in a marketplace where the consumer is free to choose on the basis of objective principles, and that such success is not the result of heavy promotion or advertising, shift in advertising, consumption by purchasers normally tied to applicant or assignee, or other business events extraneous to the merits of the claimed invention, etc. *In re Mageli*, 470, F.2d 1380, 176 USPQ 305 (CCPA 1973).

The Board of Patent Appeals and Interference opined that, merely showing that there was commercial success of an article which embodied the invention is not sufficient. *Ex parte Remark*, 15 USPQ2d 1498, 1502-02 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1990). See MPEP § 716.03(b).

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7. Applicant filed two 1.132 declarations, declaring that there was a long felt need for the claimed invention. In order to establish a long felt need, several factors must be considered, first, the defect must have been a recognized and persistent one in fact. *Orthopedic Equip. Co., Inc. v. All Orthopedic Appliances, Inc.*, 707 F.2d 1376, 217 USPQ 1281 (Fed. Cir. 1983); Second, both the length of the perceived need and the failures by others must have been in the context of the "same state of the art." Thus, significant improvements in the art that bear on the inventor's solution dilute the significance of prior need and failures. See *Newell Companies, Inc. v. Kenney Manufacturing Co.*, 864 F.2d 757, 768, 9 USPQ2d 1417, 1426 (Fed. Cir. 1988); Finally, it must appear that the inventor's solution in fact satisfied the long-felt need, that is, reached a result superior to prior solutions.

Here, applicant had failed to provide adequate support because the declarations are conclusory statements.

8. Applicant filed a 1.132 declaration intending to show support of secondary considerations, i.e. unique human factor. It has not been considered in its entirety because applicant has failed to provide copies of the cited references for examiner's review. However, as interpreted the declaration supports the notion of expected beneficial results. "A solid color-coded device having peripheral device identification, constitutes a solid color image which requires far less mental processing than required

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by the cited art. . . “ See Dr. Albert Mehrabian’s declaration under 37 C.F.R. 1.132, conclusion, page 6. It appears that through his extensive research, he expects for there to be “*a substantial advantage in using solid colors of high chroma*” (emphasis added) *Id.*, at paragraph 8. The court in *In re Gershon* opined that, expected beneficial results are evidence of obviousness just as unexpected results are evidence of unobviousness. *In re Gershon*, 54 CCPA 1066, 372 F.2d 535, 152 USPQ 602 (1967).

Response to Amendment

9. The amendment filed December 12, 2000 is objected to under 35 U.S.C. 132 because it may introduce new matter into the disclosure. 35 U.S.C. 132 states that no amendment shall introduce new matter into the disclosure of the invention. The added material which is not supported by the original disclosure is as follows: “solid color areas”, and the kit which now comprises **more than** “a plurality of indicia element sets for labeling a respective power strip AC outlet portion, power cord terminals and the peripheral device to which AC power is desired to be distributed” as originally disclosed. The kit is useful in retro-fitting after-market AC power strip product.” See Applicant’s original disclosure, page 3, lines 23-26. The new language goes far beyond the scope originally disclosed. Applicant should not it was not given any patentable weight when added to the RCE, due to its location in the preamble. Applicant is invited to provide examiner, with page and line number with where these expanded limitations of “the kit”

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are supported in the original disclosure. Applicant is required to cancel the new matter in the reply to this Office Action.

Claim Objections

10. Claims 37, 39, and 40 objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant is required to cancel the claim(s), or amend the claim(s) to place the claim(s) in proper dependent form, or rewrite the claim(s) in independent form. Claims 37, 39, and 40, as discussed above are not supported by the original specification. As claimed, the kit comprises **claim 29**, plus variations of the other independent claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

11. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

12. Claims 29-40, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claims 29, 33, 37, and 39, It is not clear what is meant by *said housing having a plurality of discrete, solid colored areas disposed near certain ones of said plurality of outlets*. As depicted in Figures 3 and 4, the "discrete solid color areas" surround each outlet. The phraseology, "disposed near certain ones" is vague, and indefinite.

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The Following Art Rejection is given as best understood in light of the 35 USC §112 rejection above.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

13. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

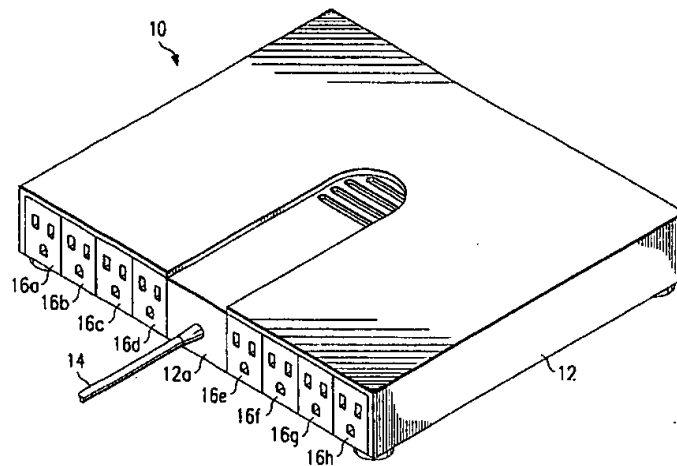
(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

14. Claims 29, and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Kensington SmartSockets Strip Model and Adapter Model reviewed by LaMont Ridgell of MacUser, published September 1997. The Kensington SmartSocket Strip meets all of the limitations of claims 29, and 30. (See photograph and review).

15. Claims 29-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,589,718 ('718 Pat.).

16. The '718 Pat. teaches all the limitations of claims 29-32. See Figure ~~below~~ ~~below~~. The '718 Pat. teaches an input power cord (14), a plurality of output receptacles (16a-h), and a housing member (12). This reference does not specifically disclose an insulated housing. However, insulation is an inherent property of any electrical device because it serves as protection means. Additionally, the '718 Pat. teaches color-coding system such that the outlets are assigned a different color. (3:35-51, and 4:1-7).

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

17. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

18. Claims 33-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,589,718 ('718 Pat.).

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19. **Claim 33**– The '718 Pat. teaches an AC, electrical power strip apparatus (10) having a plurality of outlets (16a-16h) comprising an input power cord member (14), an electrical distribution main electrically coupled to said input power cord member and to said plurality of electrical outlets (col. 1, lines 66-67, and col. 2, lines 1-3). '718 Pat. teaches a housing member (12) for housing said distribution mains and said outlets, and for securing said power cord member to said main, said housing have a plurality of discrete areas for receiving a plurality of colored stickers and a plurality of color coded for retrofitting said plurality of outlets, said plurality of colored stickers and said plurality of color coded indicia provided for associating certain ones of said plurality of outlets with a particular color, and for associating certain ones of said plurality of outlets with said plurality of peripheral devices.

The '718 Pat. does not expressly disclose stickers, however, '718 Pat. discloses:

[T]he cables that interconnect the above components could have a **red designation** (whether it be by coloring the cables red or **applying a red indicia**, such as stripes or rings on the cables or on the connectors attached to the cables).

('718 Pat., at 3:50-51, and 4:1-3). (emphasis added).

The '718 Pat. does not expressly claim or disclose a "plurality of colored stickers." However, well within the scope of the invention is a plurality of color stickers.

[E]ach outlet 16a-16h, and the corresponding portion of the housing containing same would be **color-coded** to correspond to the particular component to be

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powered thereby. In fact, a **color coding scheme** could be imparted to the entire audio-video system including the interconnects that connect the various components.

('718 Pat., at 3:37-43). (emphasis added).

'718 Pat. does not expressly disclose that a sticker is to be attached to a peripheral device. However, it can be inferred by use of the phrase entire audio-video system. (*Id.*, at 42). Examiner interprets entire as follows: Entire is defined as having no element or part left out. (Webster's, at 387). Therefore it would be reasonable to infer that the peripheral device would be included as *part* of the entire audio-video system. Alternatively, '718 Pat. discloses:

For example, audio program sources, such as CD players, Record players, tape decks and AM/FM tuners would be **assigned a certain color**, such as red[.] (at 3:43-45). (emphasis added).

It is also obvious to infer that a source would not only be assigned a color, but would have indicia indicating that the source was assigned a certain color.

20. **Claim 34** – The '718 Pat. discloses all things previously discussed but also teaches the following limitations: a plurality of sets of a plurality of colored stickers for selective attachment to an interconnecting electrical cord, each colored sticker being distinct, and colored a different color than other color sticker provided on the said portions,

According to another feature of the present invention, an input **designating indicia** is associated with each

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outlet 16a-16h to **clearly identify** the type of component that should be used with each outlet in accordance with the type of **AC power** processing associated with the **outlet**.

(*Id.*, at 3:33-37). (emphasis added).

The '718 Pat. *does not expressly recite that the colored stickers are distinct from other colored stickers in the set.* However '718 Pat., at 4:3-7 discloses;

The video source components, and the outlets 16e and 16f, would be assigned another color and the audio amplifiers, and the outlets 16g and 16h would be assigned still another color.

Therefore, it is clear that they are distinct.

21. **Claim 35** – depends from claim 33, and adds the limitation of colored electrical extension cords, along with the matching color code scheme as previously recited.

The '718 Pat. teaches;

[T]he **cables** that interconnect the above components could have a red designation (**whether it be by coloring the cables red** or applying a red indicia, such as stripes or rings on the cables or on the **connectors attached to the cables**).

('718 Pat., at 3:50-51, and 4:1-3). (emphasis added).

Examiner notes that "Cables that interconnect the above components" (*Id.*) is a sufficient description of an extension cord. Further, a plurality of extension cords is consistent with the scope of the invention of '718 Pat., because it is understood that

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each assigned color portion may need a matching cable that interconnects the above components. As such '718 Pat. teaches this limitation.

22. **Claim 36** – depends from claim 35, and does not add any new limitations not discussed in previous claims.

23. **Claim 37** – *'718 Pat., does not expressly disclose a kit having the recited limitations* However, the recitation “A kit” has not been given patentable weight because the recitation occurs in the preamble. A preamble is generally not accorded any patentable weight where it merely recites the purpose of a process or the intended use of a structure, and where the body of the claim does not depend on the preamble for completeness but, instead, the process steps or structural limitations are able to stand alone. See *In re Hirao*, 535 F.2d 67, 190 USPQ 15 (CCPA 1976) and *Kropa v. Robie*, 187 F.2d 150, 152, 88 USPQ 478, 481 (CCPA 1951). Further, as previously indicated, the kit as recited, is far beyond the scope of the original disclosure.

24. **Claim 38** – is a method claim with follows the apparatus. As such all applicable art rejections based on the apparatus, correspond to this method claim 38.

25. **Claim 39** – recites the limitation “A kit” in the preamble, and that limitation is not given any weight for reasons discussed in claim 37. Claim 39 also recites a new

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limitation not EXPRESSLY discussed in the above claims. The new limitations are “sets of at least three like-colored stickers” for attaching to a portion, an extension cord, and a peripheral device. Similarly having “all sticker sets” be distinct colors from other sets. The ‘718 Pat. reference inherently teaches these limitations. **These limitations are merely cumulative, changing neither the spirit nor the scope of the invention.** Further, as previously indicated, the kit as recited, is far beyond the scope of the original disclosure.

26. **Claim 40** – depends from claim 39, and adds the limitations regarding the plurality of extension cords. See above for discussion.

27. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the device taught by ‘718 Pat., to include stickers to attach to either: discrete areas of the housing extension cords, or peripheral devices or any combination/sub-combination thereof, because consistent with the scope of the ‘718 Pat. invention, color indicia /(stickers) attached throughout the entire system (powerstrip, extension cord, peripheral device) *enables the various outlets provided to be **easily identified** and thus insures that each component connected thereto will be connected to an outlet specifically designed for the particular electronic characteristic for the component.* (‘718 Pat., at 4:14-18). (emphasis added).

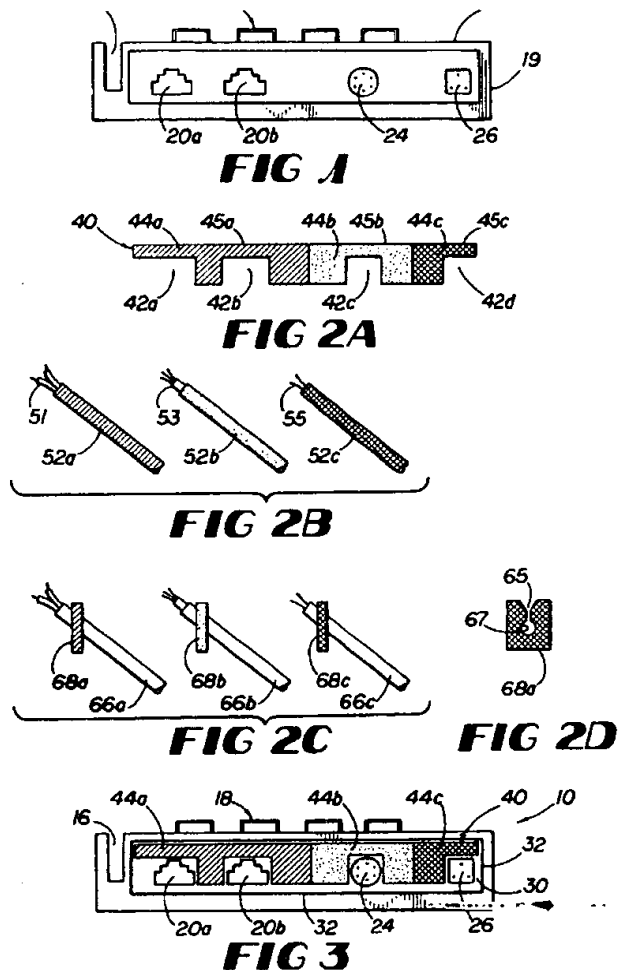
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28. Claims 33-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5, 589,718 ('718 Pat.) and U.S. Patent 5,775,935, Barna, further in view of U.S. Patent 5,366,250, Sunabe.

29. The '718 Pat, does not expressly teach stickers or stickers having indicia on them. However, Barna teaches a color coded alignment strip (40), (see figures below) attached to a device, which corresponds to color coded cables (52a, 52b, and 52c). The color coded alignment strip (which extends entirely around the electrical connection ports) is positioned and aligned in a recessed area (30) such that the colors of the alignment strip match the color of the cables.

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30. Barna explicitly teaches the color of the power cord connection cable (52c) corresponds with the color (44c) of the a section of the color coded alignment strip. (5:16-19). Barna also teaches color-coding with tags (68a). Official notice is taken that



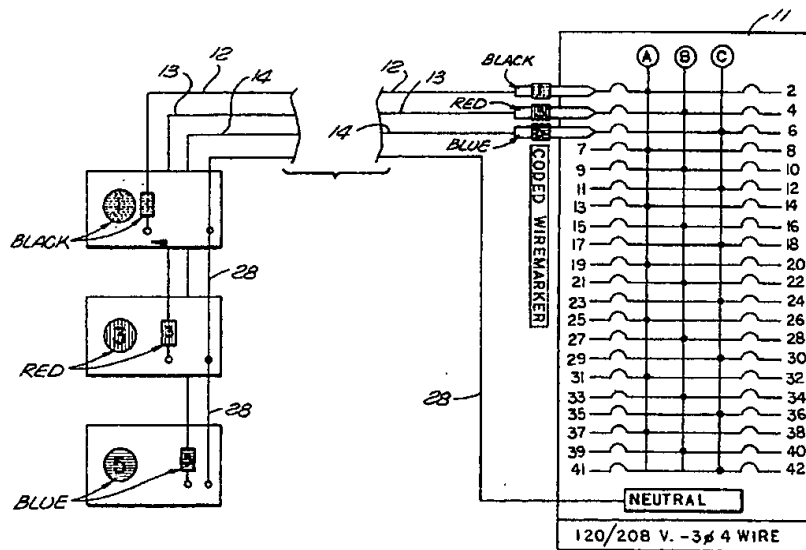
the sticker and tag solve the same problem of properly identifying proper connection via a color code system. Hence, both function to ensure easy visual indication.

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31. It is obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify '718 Pat. with the teachings of Barna, because Barna objective was to "provide a cable connecting system that secure a color coded alignment strip [] in a manner that prevents inadvertent removal of the alignment strip." (Barna, at 3:19-22).

32. Sunabe teaches a set of wire markers (22), a set of outlet box markers (23) with the markers carried on the carrier with each marker of each set being separable peelable from the carrier. (at 3:50-53). The markers are numbered sequentially and are color coded red, black, and blue. See figure above.

33. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the



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teachings of "718 Pat., and Barna, with the teachings of Sunabe because as Sunabe discloses a visual pattern system reduces errors in wiring, and also makes tracing easier, and provides codes with stand out from conventional wiring diagrams, by "providing two indicia in a single component." (at 3:25-26).

34. Claims 33-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kensington SmartSockets Strip Model and Adapter Model reviewed by LaMont Ridgell of MacUser, (Kensington), published September 1997, in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,366,250, Sunabe.

35. Kensington teaches an electrical power strip apparatus (see figure), comprising a input power cord, an electrical distribution main, a plurality of electrical output receptacles, a housing members to accommodate AC adapters. Included are six pairs of labels that match the colored rings around each socket. Kensington teaches putting on each peripheral and a matching sticker on its power cord.

36. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of Kensington with the teachings of Sunabe because both solve the same problem utilizing indicia/indicia means for "end to end" correct attachment of wires to reduce errors or mistakes in connecting or disconnecting of wires.

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Response to Arguments

37. Applicant's arguments filed December 12, 2000 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

38. In response to applicant's argument that the used of solid colored stickers are substantially more prominent to the human eye than that of the cited prior art is interesting. However, the '718 Pat. **teaches color**, in particular the color red, for *providing a visual indication* (2:29-30, and 4:40) and *various outlets provided to be easily identified* (4:14-15). The '718 patent gives examples, of indicia which can be interpreted very broadly, and **does not exclude stickers**. Further, there is no support in the specification or the claims that indicates that the stickers are solid colored. Thus applicant's intended use of the stickers is clearly taught, and suggested by '718 Pat..

39. Additionally, although the '718 Pat. does not expressly disclose a color-coding system where **each** outlet is assigned a different color, it is implicitly taught in the reference. The reference teaches coloring portions for example, 16a-16f, one color, and 16e and 16f, another color, as such, it implicitly teaches that 16a can be one color, 16b can be another color, 16c can be yet another color, and so on. Furthermore, '718 Pat.'s abstract discloses that the AC power processing at one or more of the outlets differs from the processing at one or more of the other outlets, which clearly suggests a need for color-coding **one** or more of the outlets the same color, and so on.

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40. In response to applicant's argument that '718 Pat. teaches hardwiring, and the very purpose of this invention is not to hardwire. This argument is spurious because applicant's intention is not claimed and the specification is silent regarding that aspect. Further, the fact that '718 Pat. hardwired purposefully does not overcome the suggestions of color-coding for powering multiple peripheral devices from a color-coded central power source. Further, while it is true that the '718 Pat. teaches hardwired color-coding, **and its necessity as it pertains to that invention**; the fact that applicant has recognized another advantage which would flow naturally from following the suggestion of the prior art cannot be the basis for patentability when the differences would otherwise be obvious. See *Ex parte Obiaya*, 227 USPQ 58, 60 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1985).

41. In response to applicant's argument that integrally provided indicia with solid color coded indicia for distinguishing and associating a particular. Examiner is of the position that indicia is indicia, be it matching numbers, words, or acronyms, or colors. Alternatively, if the integrally provided indicia is for example, *audio equipment only* (or a picture of a radio), or *lights* (or a picture of a light bulb), then '718 Pat. implicitly teaches this by disclosing

an input designating indicia is associated with each outlet 16a-16h to clearly identify the type of component that should be used with each outlet in accordance with the type of AC power processing associated with the outlet. For example each outlet 16a-16h, and the corresponding portion of the housing containing same would be color-

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coded to correspond to the particular component to be powered thereby. (at 3:33-37).

42. In response to applicant's argument that areas of the housing member are either integrally or retrofittedly provided with solid color coded stickers having an indicia means for identifying a particular peripheral device. Examiner refers applicant to paragraph 7, which states that this is taught by '718 Pat.. Alternatively, if "a particular device" is to be viewed literally, then, how can applicants invention be "so distinguished as to its nearly infinite flexibility"? (See 09/221,761, applicant's response to final, paper no. 7, page 6, line 6).

43. It is the examiner's position that this is obvious. It is [] well settled that obviousness may be concluded from common knowledge and common sense of the person skilled in the art without a specific hint or suggestion. *In re Bozek*, 416 F.2d 1385, 163 USPQ 545 (CCPA1969). It is common sense that the stickers (or any other matching indicia) are essential to the invention. It is the examiner's position that Applicant is attempting to patent an old idea that is not novel. This after-market kit could be colored duct tape, colored diskette labels, post-it™ notes or tabs, packed with as many colors to accommodate the outlets of a power strip. Person with less than that of ordinary skill in the art have used labels or indicia means to color-code/match.

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Communications with the PTO

44. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sharon Polk whose telephone number is 703-308-6257.

The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Josie Ballato can be reached on 703-308-0269. The fax numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-308-3914 for regular communications and 703-308-3914 for After Final communications.

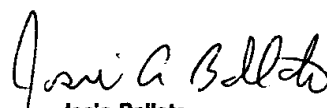
Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0956.

March 23, 2001

Sharon Polk

Patent Examiner

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Josie Ballato
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 2800

3/26/01